

A Narrative of some Observations lately made by certain Missionaries in the Upper Egypt; communicated in a Letter written from Cairo the sixth of Januar. 1670.

BY yours of *April* the 20th last I find, that you desire to hear some news concerning my Voyage in the *Upper Egypt*. I am very ready to give you that satisfaction, provided you make our friends share in it. I shall therefore tell you, that I have spent three months time in that voyage, accompanied with my Brothers, the *F. Charles* and *Francis*, alwaies ascending upon the *Nile* as high as 300 leagues above this City, being two daies journey on this side of the *Cascata's* of the *Nile*, & where never any French-man hath been within the memory of man. I there admired store of Idol-Temples yet entire, together with very ancient Pallaces filled with Statues and Idols. I counted in one place alone 7 *Obelisks*, like those at *Rome*, and about 120 Columns in one Hall, of the bigness of five Brasses; full within and without, from the top to the bottom, with Hieroglyphic Letters, and with Figures of false Deities. I found Statues of white marble, and some of black, of the bigness of three persons, with a sword on their side, and of an hard stone; namely, a Man and a Woman, at the least of the height of eight fathoms, though seated in chairs; but well proportioned: And two others of black marble representing women, with Globes on their head and extravagant coverings thereon, which were two foot broad from one shoulder to the other.

If I had had more time allow'd me to make this Voyage, or had not been obliged to stay long time upon the account of our Mission, in such places where nothing considerable was to be seen, I might have made very curious Observations. There are places where I could not stay to view them but half an hour, which required very well the stay of many hours, and we lighted not but in two places, where Antiquities were to be seen, one whereof is called *Lozor*, and the other *Candien*, which is a very ancient Castle, esteemed by the Tradition of the Country to have formerly been the Residence of a King. Nor indeed is this hard to believe even before one enters into it, considering in the advenaes of the said Castle a great number of *Sphinxes*

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standing in a row, and turning their head towards the Alley. 'Tis known that this is an Idol having the Head of a Woman and the Body of a Lion, which was once a famous Deity among the Egyptians. They are distant from each other about two paces, and are 20 feet long. I walk'd in four Alleys ending at four Gates of the Castle ; and for ought I know there may be more of them, seeing I went but half round the Castle, which is very spacious. I reckon'd 60 of them on one side of one Alley, and as many over against it ; and 51 in another Alley ; all well measur'd. The Alleys are of the largeness of a Pal-mall : the Gates of that Castle are of an extraordinary height cover'd with most excellent stones. Measuring one which maketh the height of one of them, I found it 26½ foot long, and proportionably thick. I believe, that there are above a million of Figures in profil, none in front : I speak of those that are graven on the Walls and Pillars. I should have needed a whole Month to observe all the particulars of that place. I did content myself to draw only the postures of a douzen of the most extravagant *Demons* together with their Adorers of both Sexes ; and some Frontispieces of Temples, which are not very rich in Architecture, but built of very fine stone. That which most pleas'd me was the ground, where the Azure and the other Colours, which are like enamel, appear as fresh as if they had been laid on but a month before. There are Temples so spacious, that 3000 people may stand on the roof with ease. In the same Castle there is a Pond, the water whereof is bitter, set about with fine stones. This water is said perfectly to whiten Linnen all alone ; which I tried not, but we dipp'd our handkerchief in it, which kept the sent of Soap for four or five daies.

These are the only curiosities I can send you of our Voyage which is not the fiftieth part of what was to be seen : but our time being limited we only could stay in two *places*, our design not being curiosity, but to satisfy the charge of the Mission among the Christian *Cophthes* of that Countrey, which are in great number there, and have many Monasteries and ancient Churches, but poor. We have pass'd many places, where was neither Priest nor Church, but only the poor people like sheep without a Shepherd. I hope shortly to return thither, and not to come back again

gain with so much haft, after I shall have made a little voyage upon the Red Sea, whither I go every year to visit the poor Slaves in the Gallies of the Turks, &c. *F. Brothais.*

Extract of a French Letter, written by F. Jaques Paul Babin, a Jesuit, to F. Ignatius Bardy of the same Company, from Negropont, May 15, 1670; and lately communicated by the Learned Jesuit Berret to a Friend of his in London; concerning the Flux of the Euripus.

ALthough the *Euripus* be a Symbol of inconstancy; yet hath it this advantage, that whereas the great things, which the Antients have recorded of the Cities and Rivers of *Greece*, are or appear no more in being, the *Euripus* still remains what it hath been. 'Tis true, that the Town of *Chalcis* is destroyed, but in the place thereof we may see that of *Negropont* in *Eubœa*, which is sever'd from *Bœtia* only by an Arm of the Sea, where this *Euripus* is found; over which are built two Bridges, one of Stone, the other of Wood; in the middle whereof is a Rock, on which the *Venetians* formerly built a Castle, which on its Gates doth yet shew the *Lions*, the Arms of the City.

I have not contented my self with reading what Antient Writers have left us of this *Phænomenon*, who did either not see it or not consider it with that carefulness and attention I have done, having made upon the place long Observations, which were found conform to those intelligent Natives, of whom I made inquiry, especially the Turks, that have the care of the Mills of this *Euripus*, and know all the times when the Wings and Wheels of them are to be mov'd and turn'd according as the Water of this *Streight* by its flux and reflux changes its course.

The *Euripus* then is a *Streight* of the *Ægean Sea*, so narrow, that a Galley can scarce pass through it, under a Bridge, built between the Cittadel and the Donjon of *Negropont*. But not only this place, where the Bridge is, is call'd the *Euripus*, but also ten or twelve leagues on each side of it, where the Channel being more large, the inconstant course is not so sensible, as at the foot of the Castle. For three or four leagues on each side there are found six or seven Gulfs, wherein this water shuts